

ANNUAL REPORT

IN UNION THERE IS STRENGTH



The Associated Charities of Atlanta.
cooperation has aided 8330 families.

It has promoted

Medical Inspection
of School Children,
The Girls Night School,
Public Health Show.



CO-OPERATION.

VISION:

A community where all children and families flourish.

MISSION:

To ensure the success of children in jeopardy by empowering families.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

By the year 2020, 200,000 additional children and youth in Metropolitan Atlanta facing chronic economic, social or health challenges will succeed in safe, stable, nurturing homes with self-sufficient families—surrounded by a community which champions public policy that promotes the well-being of all children and families.



Leonard Street Orphans' Home circa 1890



Letter from the Board Chair and CEO

“Our aim is to restore, where possible,
the families who come to us to economic
independence and to [help them toward
becoming] self-supporting citizens.”

President's Report, 1919 Annual Report



Today, nearly 100 years after the above Annual Report was issued by our predecessor agency, Associated Charities of Atlanta, the essence of our mission remains the same: *to ensure the success of children in jeopardy by empowering families.*

Our rich history began in 1890 when two ambitious women, Sarah Grant and Lucetta Lawson, opened the Leonard Street Orphans' Home, located on what is now the Spelman College Campus. We honored these women and their legacy at our May 2011 Annual Meeting, held just yards from the original site of the Orphans' Home, by awarding the inaugural Sarah Grant and Lucetta Lawson "Service Above Self Award" to one of our most faithful supporters whose service to the families and children of Georgia spanned decades. We also honored our long-standing, devoted friends including members of our Honorary Board and Board of Counselors.

As we celebrated our 120th anniversary this year, we had much to commemorate. 120 years of collaboration and community partnership starting with our predecessor, Associated Charities of Atlanta, coordinating

the efforts of agencies throughout Atlanta to provide relief for local families following the 1905 blizzard. 120 years of advocacy for children and families as exemplified by the Child Welfare Association's (another forerunner of Families First) promotion of legislation to license the practice of adoption in Georgia. 120 years of industry leading innovation including the establishment of Weaver Gardens in 1991, the nation's first transitional housing facility designed to provide independent living skills for young, homeless, first-time mothers. And, more recently, the 2010 initiation of Placement to Permanency (PTP), a demonstration project in partnership with the Georgia Department of Human Service's Division of Family and Children Services, funded by the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation, to employ national best practices to promote safety, well-being and permanency for youth in foster care.

Every day we are inspired by the remarkable fortitude and vision of the devoted leaders who preceded us and are committed to working with the same vigor, innovation and dedication to address the challenges facing families and children in the 21st century. This past year Families First served 43,330 individuals through more than thirty programs — nearly 3,000 more individuals than the previous year. Our reach is a tribute to our continual efforts to enhance and expand the ways we serve the community. In keeping with our mission, we introduced several new programs this year:

- **Ways to Work:** A national program of the Alliance for Children and Families that provides used car loans to qualified working parents who are unable to receive credit approval elsewhere. The first program of its kind in Georgia, Ways to Work was launched locally by Families First and Jewish Family and Career Services of Atlanta in February 2011.
- **Make it Click:** A groundbreaking mentoring program for the youth living in our Permanency Cooperatives. This initiative puts an innovative spin on traditional mentor matching programs, allowing longer lasting, organically grown relationships to develop.

- **Teen Success:** A program that supports teen mothers and mothers-to-be who are attempting to cope with two extraordinary life challenges at once: adolescence and parenting. Through weekly support groups we provide these young women with help in setting and achieving goals for their futures.
- **Partnership with Amerigroup:** Amerigroup, one of Georgia's leading Care Management Organizations, has requested that Families First train and support Resource Mothers for Amerigroup clients whose babies are born weighing less than 3.5 pounds. Resource Mothers provide on-going emotional and practical support, information, and links to resources to ensure that new birth mothers are able to take care of themselves as well as their infants. The Resource Mothers initiative is a major component of Georgia's Planning for a Healthy Baby (P4HB) initiative,

With as much as we have accomplished this past year, however, the need is still great. Thanks to your support and engagement, we can and will continue our dogged pursuit of a community where all children and families flourish.

120

This past year has paved the way for us to continue to serve more and more children and families in the upcoming years. We have a lot of ground to cover and families to serve.

With the support and ownership of our communities we can continue our mission for the next 120 years and serve, encourage and help maintain healthy, safe communities for our children and our children's children.

MORE



Kim E. Anderson
Families First CEO

Beth Tanis
2010-2011 Families
First Board Chair

A Tribute to Evelyn Messer: A Lifetime of Service



William F. and Caroline V. Catton Bilingual/Bicultural Fellowship recipients Carla Nunez and Graciella Perez with Mrs. Evelyn Messer.

During our momentous 120th Year Celebration in May 2011, Families First instituted a new tradition. The Sarah Grant and Lucetta Lawson "Service Above Self Award" was created to honor a Families First volunteer, board member, client or employee who embodies the commitment to the service of children in jeopardy that is the cornerstone of our agency's legacy. As the founders of the Leonard Street Orphans' Home, Ms. Lawson and Ms. Grant's enduring dedication, tenacity and compassion for children and their families continues to inspire and impel our board, staff and volunteers as well as many of our clients.

On May 17, 2011, we presented the inaugural Sarah Grant and Lucetta Lawson "Service Above Self Award" to one of our most faithful supporters whose service to the families and children of Georgia spans decades, Mrs. Evelyn Messer.

Evelyn's association with Families First began in the early 1970s. She served the agency and its clients in various capacities including as a member

of the Board of Directors where she was an early proponent of the rigorous evaluation and assessment of our programs and services. Most recently Evelyn was a highly engaged member of our Honorary Board where she provided both staff and board counsel related to a variety of governance and program related issues. As a result of her extensive international travels, as well as



her work nationally including with the Florence Crittenton Foundation and the Child Welfare League of America, Evelyn brought a unique, thoughtful perspective which led to the development and enhancement of many of Families First's programs. Evelyn was a stalwart champion of professional excellence in the field of social work. She indubitably believed that when we educate a social worker we impact countless lives for generations to come. Given her undying commitment to the profession, and with an eye to the need for more Spanish speaking social workers, Evelyn created, in honor of her parents, the William F. and Caroline V. Catton Bilingual/Bicultural Fellowship program offering bilingual MSW candidates the opportunity to combine their academic studies with practical experience at Families First. Georgia State University students, Graciella Perez and Carla Nunez, are the most recent recipients of the Fellowship.

Mrs. Evelyn Messer lost a courageous battle with cancer on Wednesday, June 22, 2011. We are sad to say goodbye to this inspiring woman but graciously accept the challenge to celebrate her life and continue the crusade she so faithfully championed over the years.

While accepting The Sarah Grant and Lucetta Lawson "Service Above Self Award", Evelyn simply said "It's always my interest to help other people. I think that is one of the primary things for us to do." Like Sarah Grant and Lucetta Lawson, Evelyn's vision and commitment helped make Families First better, stronger and more effective in its role as a leader in the field of social service in Atlanta as well as nationally.

May we all embrace Evelyn's passion and continue to make it our mission to serve others whenever and however we can.





HOPE FOR THEIR FUTURE



THE LEONARD STREET ORPHANS' HOME

est. 1890

CHILD AND YOUTH PERMANENCY PROGRAMS

- Adoption
- Georgia Center for Resources and Support
- Reunion Registry
- Foster Care and Transitional Living Program
- Permanency Cooperatives
- Second Chance Home
- Placement to Permanency Program

The Leonard Street Orphans' Home was founded in 1890 by Sarah L. Grant and Lucetta M. Lawson to "train and take care of needy colored girls who are orphans or have neither parents nor other relatives able to provide for them." Today Families First still has programs geared to giving children in jeopardy hope for a permanent, stable home.



In 2010–2011 the Adoption Program served 8,601 clients and enabled 24 finalized adoptions, ensuring permanent homes for children and youth in Georgia.

The Georgia Center for Resources and Support and the Georgia Adoption Reunion Registry both experienced an increase in clients served through their support services for individuals and families who have experienced the joys of adoption.

Our Foster Care and Transitional Living Programs experienced increased success as well. In general

children stayed in care with us fewer days and had better outcomes compared to last year.

A record 12 youth in Families First's permanency cooperatives and The Whatley-Showell Second Chance home were enrolled in post secondary education.

Families First hosted its first Spring Break Camp for 20 youth from our Permanency Cooperatives and Foster Care programs. The overall theme was to build self confidence, leadership skills, and have fun!





IN 2010-2011 CHILD AND YOUTH PERMANENCY LAUNCHED TWO NEW PROGRAMS:

Make it Click Mentoring Program is a positive youth development collaboration between Families First and community volunteers who join to create a community network of sustained relationships for children in foster care. The Make it Click Mentoring Program is dedicated to educating and training individuals who demonstrate a remarkable commitment to community through caring for youth. All volunteers

participate in activities with youth in care including monthly special engagement activities, such as bowling and cookouts.

Teen Success is a nationally recognized model that provides an unconditional supportive environment for teenagers ages 13–19 years who are pregnant or parenting with the following goals:

1. Learn information, skills, and behaviors to prevent an additional pregnancy
2. Improve ability to cope with the challenges of parenthood and adolescence
3. Develop skills to build better relationships
4. Receive encouragement to successfully finish their education



*IN JUNE 2011 A CHILD & YOUTH PERMANENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
COMPRISED OF CONSUMERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, WAS CREATED TO
ASSIST WITH THE RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES AND TO OFFER
ADDITIONAL INSIGHT INTO CLIENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ISSUES.*



“If we can be a friend, helping through crises which would otherwise overwhelm...there can be no doubt that the prosperity of the community is served.”

Associated Charities 1914 Annual Report

HEALTHY FAMILIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Counseling
- Effective and Nurturing Parenting
- Seminars for Divorcing Parents
- Healthy Babies, Healthy Moms
- School Success

In 1924 the agency changed its name from “Associated Charities of Atlanta” to “Family Welfare Society” to give emphasis to the fact that its primary mission was the preservation and rehabilitation of families rather than as a relief agency. From our earliest days counseling and family health has been a major focus of our work.

Families First’s Counseling Initiative, which includes our Family Counseling, Community Based Counseling, Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP), Anger Management and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), assists children, parents, and families in expressing, understanding and coping with the situations and events that cause them

distress and challenge their ability to be healthy and well.

Families First provides solution-focused counseling and therapy throughout Metropolitan Atlanta at our community-based offices, as well as in partnership with schools, youth development organizations, housing service agencies, and health centers.

IN FY10–11

- We served 12,671 individuals in our Counseling initiative
- 63% of Families First counseling clients reported an increase in coping skills and 58% reported an increase in daily functioning.
- We served 811 individuals through our Doula and TAPP (Teen Aged Pregnant and Parenting) programs, which includes the mother, father, baby, and any other involved family members.
- The Healthy Babies Healthy Moms initiative hosted a mother and daughter event to address issues related to communication between grandparents and teens, in an effort to enhance their support system.
- Families First in Schools continues its mission to improve parent-child communication through a series of structured activities that encourage supportive family interaction, parent networking, community building and stronger relationships with school staff.
- CHISPA (Spanish for “Spark”) is a program design to prepare children for elementary school and to “spark” parents to advocate for their families particularly related to educational attainment.
- Seminars for Divorcing Families programs achieved incredible outcomes in FY10-11. Both the children and the parents participating in “Rollercoasters” and “What About Me” reported statistically significant positive changes in behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. Additionally, both the parents and children were highly satisfied with the program.



Seven-year-old Monique donates her savings to Families First.

IN 2011 A NEW PARTNERSHIP WAS FORGED:

Amerigroup, one of Georgia's Care Management Organizations coordinating healthcare for low-income families, requested to partner with Families First to provide "Resource Mothers" as a part of Georgia's Planning for a

Healthy Baby (P4HB) initiative, also known as the Medicaid waiver. P4HB, along with the Resource Mother Initiative, seeks to help women delay a second pregnancy for two years while they are at maximum health and well-being.



HEALTHY BABIES, HEALTHY MOMS PROGRAMS: BABIES WERE BORN HEALTHY (93%), TEEN MOTHERS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THEIR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PARENTING AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT ISSUES, AND TEENS REPORT ACTIVELY USING CONTRACEPTION (76%). TAPP CLIENTS RETURNED TO SCHOOL AFTER DELIVERY (86%) AND DOULA CLIENTS DELIVERED BABIES NATURALLY (92%).



“If we can secure from time to time a new vantage ground in health, in work, or in housing, and then finally restore to independence and self-respect... if this is being done there can be no doubt that the prosperity of the community is served.”

Associated Charities 1914 Annual Report

FAMILY SUSTAINABILITY AND EMPOWERMENT

- Project G.R.O.W. at DeLowe Village
- Shelter-A-Family at Georgian Hills
- Weaver Gardens
- Residential Supportive Services
- Ways to Work

In 2010–2011 78% of clients within our Project G.R.O.W. program at DeLowe Village maintained their sobriety for more than one year.

Our Shelter a Family program at Georgian Hills served 91 individuals compared to 87 last year. All families served are low income and live in Fulton County. 100% of Our Shelter A Family program clients maintained their housing for 6 months or longer

In FY10-11, Families First served 21 mothers and their babies, a total of 42 individuals, at Weaver Gardens.

WE LAUNCHED TWO NEW PROGRAMS THIS YEAR:

Families First Community Support Services (CSS) is a community-based program that offers life skills seminars and program activities designed to improve economic self sufficiency, tenant-landlord relations and the overall quality of life of residents of affordable housing developments. Among other things, the program equips parents and children with critical skills for building and maintaining strong, healthy relationships and long-term success.

CSS was launched as a new program in spring of 2011, adapting services and programs that have been an integral part of Families First service delivery into an expanded collaboration with affordable housing developers and managers.

Ways to Work was launched in spring 2011 and in 4 months received 345 calls from interested parties. It is well on its way to being a successful program.



Families First staff builds a greenhouse at our Palmetto Cooperative.



IN FY10-11 WEAVER GARDENS' OCCUPANCY RATE WAS HIGH AND TURNOVER WAS LOW. ALL RESIDENTS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN FOLLOWING AN EDUCATION AND/OR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM TRACK. ADDITIONALLY, CLIENTS DEMONSTRATED A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BOTH PARENTING AND NUTRITION. OF THOSE CLIENTS WHO LEFT WEAVER GARDENS IN FY10-11, 93% MOVED INTO STABLE, PERMANENT HOUSING.



The 13th Annual Dining for a Difference

March 3, 2011 was an exceptional and emotional night as we presented *The Adoption Diaries*, true adoption stories from friends and supporters of Families First. Through poems, theatrical presentations and written “diary entries” that embodied the enormous impact adoption has on individuals in our community,

The Adoption Diaries illustrated that virtually everyone is touched, in some way, by adoption.

We welcomed keynote speaker Ashley Rhodes-Courter, author of the best-selling book *Three Little Words*, which documented her experience in the Florida foster care system and adoption at age 12. She shared aspects of her

personal story and recounted that the one person who had made the biggest impact in her life journey was a volunteer.

The evening was packed with memorable moments and encouraged attendees to consider how they can bring hope to a child’s life.

2010 HUMANITARIAN AWARD: MICHAEL BASKIN

Michael Baskin did what few single men in their late 30s would do. He selflessly relinquished his life as a bachelor to become an adoptive father to three pre-teen boys. Initially Mike adopted brothers Skye and Trai in 2008 when they were 11 and 12. However, after learning that they had an older brother Ched, who was 13 at the time, he didn’t hesitate to add him to the family. After a two-year process Ched came home to his brothers.

Mike Baskin exemplifies Families First’s hope for all adopted children. From the moment he met “his boys” he was committed to providing a loving home and the emotional, financial and educational support they needed to address tremendous challenges resulting from their past experiences. Under his care, all three boys thrived. Not only did Mike give his all to Skye, Trai and Ched, but he also forged a relationship with their two other siblings who were adopted by other families. Mike did

everything in his power to ensure that their family bond was not broken.

And his gifts did not stop there. Mike also gave back to the Families First community where he was a regular presenter at training programs for families exploring adoption and a mentor to other parents along their adoption journey.

On December 12, 2010, after a short illness, Mike unexpectedly passed away. Since this unforeseen tragedy, the Baskin family has embraced Mike’s boys who now live with their uncle in

Mississippi. The short time that Skye, Trai and Ched had with Mike was truly a blessing but the greatest gift may be that they now have a “forever family” who are continuing Mike’s commitment and dedication to them. Mike Baskin and his family embody the true meaning of the mission of Families First “to ensure the success of children in jeopardy by empowering families”.

We were honored to present our 2011 Humanitarian Award posthumously to Mr. Michael Baskin.



"The most important four letter word to me is HOPE."

Christopher Godfrey
(in his thank you speech for the Karen N. Sibley Scholarship at the 2011 Dining for a Difference)

2011 Scholarship Recipients, Tashiana Harris, Dominique Carter and Christopher Godfrey.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

It is tradition at Families First to award youth in our programs with scholarships to help them on their journey to a sustainable life. Families First currently offers three scholarships annually. The Carol Dunlap Reiser Scholarship is awarded to two young women in Families First's programs, who each receive a \$2500 scholarship which may be used for tuition, training, books, child care or other education-related needs. The Karen N. Sibley Scholarship is awarded to one former resident of Families First's foster homes who receives a \$1,000* scholarship for post-secondary education.

A 2011 graduate of Langston Hughes High School with a 3.0 grade point average, Dominique Carter is well on her way to accomplishing her goals. Dominique was a resident of our Palmetto Cooperative, a group living facility for girls in foster care. She is currently a freshman at Fort Valley State University.

Tashiana Harris became a resident of Families First's Weaver Gardens, a transitional housing program for mothers and infants, in February 2009 four days after giving birth to her son. She immediately began planning for her future and enrolled in G.E.D. classes at Job Corps. Tashiana subsequently passed all of the tests required to earn her G.E.D. Tashiana

is currently living on her own, working full time and is enrolled in classes at Georgia Perimeter College majoring in Film/Journalism.

Christopher Godfrey graduated from Banneker High School in May of 2011 with a 3.4 grade point average, great work ethic, and outstanding leadership abilities. Chris demonstrated his leadership abilities within our South Fulton Cooperative, a group living facility for boys in foster care. He is currently a freshman at Clark Atlanta University majoring in Computer Science.

In his thank you speech at Dining for a Difference, Mr. Godfrey eloquently expressed the importance and impact these scholarships can have in the

lives of young men and women like him:

"Moving into the next stage of my life, I know how much HOPE can bring. It's brought me the most talked about four-letter word, *love*....Someone close to me always says 'the only thing you are guaranteed of in life is a chance.' Thank you, Families First, for giving me my chance. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn about and understand what love truly means. It was THROUGH hope that I now know that I am worthy of love and my love is worth giving."

**This scholarship has been increased to \$2,500 thanks to a generous donation from Mrs. Karen Sibley, in whose honor the Scholarship was originally established.*



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Our government partners are crucial to our success as an agency. In 2011 we received \$5,321,554 in government funding which makes up 47% of our annual budget. In addition to providing substantial financial support, these agencies are essential community partners. We are grateful for their ongoing support.

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GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES

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JULIA WILMONT
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ANNUAL MEETING
MS. LUCY C. VANCE

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MS. TRACY BROWN

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Sonia Als
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WE ESPECIALLY RECOGNIZE our longstanding partnership with the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta which dates back to 1923 when the organizers of the Community Chest asked the Board of Directors of Associated Charities to share their membership roles. Recognizing the need for a central fundraising effort to assist our community's human services efforts our predecessor, Associated Charities, graciously tendered its list and continued to be an active supporter of what is now the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta.



United Way of
Metropolitan Atlanta

FAMILIES FIRST, INC. AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2011
(WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS FOR 2010)

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2011	Total 2010
Revenues, gains and other support:					
Contributions	\$ 897,591	\$ 793,160	\$	\$ 1,690,751	\$ 2,400,564
Government fees and grants	3,681,360			3,681,360	3,756,638
Purchase service contract fees	1,640,194			1,640,194	1,457,068
Program service fees	1,074,686			1,074,686	1,224,436
United Way	1,381,830			1,381,830	1,578,179
In-kind donations	164,093			164,093	22,992
Interest on operating funds	2,185			2,185	1,528
Miscellaneous	57,237	2,501		59,738	71,523
Interest and dividends on investments	236,443	97,574		334,017	264,416
Net realized losses on investments	(52,144)	(34,326)		(86,470)	(70,756)
Net unrealized gains and losses on investments	940,896	389,585		1,330,481	802,270
Net assets released from restrictions	1,144,244	(1,144,244)		-	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	11,168,615	104,250	-	11,272,865	11,508,858
Expenses and losses:					
Program Services:					
Child and Youth Permanency	3,983,087			3,983,087	3,934,684
Family Sustainability and Empowerment	1,722,200			1,722,200	1,715,025
Healthy Families and Relationships	2,393,352			2,393,352	2,372,565
Other programs	256,989			256,989	153,140
Total program services	8,355,628	-	-	8,355,628	8,175,414
Supporting Services:					
Fundraising	656,716			656,716	508,545
Management and general	1,502,839			1,502,839	1,575,613
Total supporting services	2,159,555	-	-	2,159,555	2,084,158
Total expenses and losses	10,515,183	-	-	10,515,183	10,259,572
Change in net assets	653,432	104,250	-	757,682	1,249,286
Net assets, beginning of year	8,207,653	4,400,584	542,297	13,150,534	11,901,248
Net assets, end of year	\$ 8,861,085	\$ 4,504,834	\$ 542,297	\$ 13,908,216	\$ 13,150,534

FAMILIES FIRST, INC. AND SUBSIDIARY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
JUNE 30, 2011 AND 2010

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,529,118	\$ 1,276,309
Interest receivable	20,204	32,622
Accounts receivable, net	654,365	866,522
Pledges receivable, net	866,864	1,113,554
Prepaid expenses and other assets	94,528	118,958
Investments	9,727,187	8,968,491
Property and equipment, net	<u>1,886,534</u>	<u>1,901,164</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 14,778,800</u>	<u>\$ 14,277,620</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 640,896	\$ 681,380
Accrued compensated absences	138,634	157,718
Advances under grants and contracts	91,054	87,988
Line of credit	-	200,000
Total liabilities	<u>870,584</u>	<u>1,127,086</u>
Commitments and contingencies		
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	8,861,085	8,207,653
Temporarily restricted	4,504,834	4,400,584
Permanently restricted	<u>542,297</u>	<u>542,297</u>
Total net assets	<u>13,908,216</u>	<u>13,150,534</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 14,778,800</u>	<u>\$ 14,277,620</u>



Chadwick Hall, Spellman College Campus circa 1945

The Amy Chadwick Society

The Amy Chadwick Society is an group of special supporters who have designated Families First in a portion of their estate planning. The society was created in recognition of the faith, commitment and sacrifice made by an English missionary, Amy Chadwick, to maintain and grow the Leonard Street Orphans' Home, the organization that started what is now Families First. Miss Chadwick dedicated her life to ensuring that African American girls would have access to a stable home and education to provide them with the best chance at life. Her contribution is still making an impact.

For more information and to become a member of the Amy Chadwick Society contact the Families First Resource Development Department at (404) 853-2809.



Visit us online at familiesfirst.org